

# THE FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Domestic and Family Violence is  
a Workplace Issue





**Challenge DV** (formerly Australia's CEO Challenge) has been partnering with workplaces to facilitate domestic and family violence prevention training since 2001. Challenge DV also creates change with a unique partnerships program that match businesses or government departments with front-line services, and hosting events designed to unite a community no longer able to accept domestic and family violence.



**No to Violence (NTV)** is the largest peak body in Australia representing organisations and individuals working with men to end family violence and operator of Men's Referral Service, which provides telephone counselling, information and referrals for men who use violence to help change their behaviour.



**Our Watch** is a national leader in the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.



**The Full Stop Foundation** supports the work of **Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia**, delivering: 24/7 trauma specialist counselling to people impacted by sexual, domestic and family violence; training and professional services to businesses, governments and community organisations to better prevent and respond to violence; and public advocacy for change.



The **UNSW Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN)** offers a knowledge exchange stream (Gendered Violence & Organisations) which has successfully partnered with over 50 organisations including a range of private sector employers to design response strategies, advise on policy and deliver expert training in gendered violence prevention and response.



**WESNET** is the national peak body for specialist women's domestic and family violence services across Australia and the leading sector expert on the intersection of technology and violence against women. WESNET provides training and advice to frontline workers, governments, technology and other businesses to ensure women can access technology safely.



**The Champions of Change Coalition** includes CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors and community leaders who believe gender equality is a major business, economic, societal and human rights issue. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, our mission is to step up beside women to help achieve gender equality and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

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## Introduction

**Domestic and family violence is endemic in our community. Its prevalence and consequences are well-documented. Domestic and family violence harms individuals, families and our social fabric. Domestic and family violence impacts our employees and our workplaces.**

Domestic and family violence is everybody's business. We must play our part.

*THE FACTS ABOUT DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE: Domestic and Family Violence is a Workplace Issue* is an extract from *PLAYING OUR PART: A Framework for Workplace Action on Domestic and Family Violence*.

We encourage all organisations within and beyond our Coalition to use *PLAYING OUR PART: A Framework for Workplace Action on Domestic and Family Violence* resources and contribute to eliminating domestic and family violence from our community.



# The facts

## 2.1 Domestic and family violence is a workplace issue

### Domestic and family violence impacts on our employees

The impacts of domestic and family violence on those that experience violence and abuse can be significant and long-lasting.<sup>1</sup> People experiencing domestic and family violence also experience many barriers to leaving a violent or abusive relationship. Indeed, it takes on average 7-8 attempts to leave a relationship and around \$18,000 and 141 hours to extricate oneself from an abusive relationship.<sup>2</sup>

This issue demands a compassionate, empathetic and non-judgmental response from workplaces.

In Australia, 62% of women who have experienced or are currently experiencing domestic and family violence are in the paid workforce.<sup>3</sup> The impact of domestic and family violence caused by perpetrators extends to workplaces and can have a negative impact on employee wellbeing, workplace health and safety and workforce productivity.

- **Impacts on employees who experience domestic and family violence:**
  - Global surveys show that between 50% and 81% of people who experienced domestic and family violence in the workplace reported their work being negatively affected as a result of the domestic violence.<sup>4</sup> This may include lateness, absences, health issues, poor concentration and under performance at work affecting overall productivity and increasing staff turnover.<sup>5</sup>
  - In Australia, nearly 50% of women who disclosed that they had experienced domestic and family violence reported that it affected their capacity to get to work (mostly because of physical injury or because they had been restrained).<sup>6</sup> Of these women:
    - nearly one in five (19%) reported that the domestic violence followed them into the workplace with, for example, abusive calls or emails or their partner physically coming to work.
    - 16% of people reported being distracted, tired and unwell and 10% needing to take time off work.
- Women who experience domestic and family violence are usually employed in higher numbers in part-time and casual work, can be earning up to 60% less compared to women who do not experience violence,<sup>7</sup> are more likely to have a disrupted work history and will likely change or lose jobs at short notice.<sup>8</sup>
- **Impacts on the workplace of employees who use domestic and family violence:**
  - Globally, studies have found that between one-third to 78% of people who use domestic violence have done so using workplace resources, during work hours.<sup>9</sup>
  - A Canadian study found that one-third of perpetrators reported emotionally abusing and/or monitoring their (ex)partner during work hours, and were distracted by thinking about their whereabouts.<sup>10</sup>
  - A United States study found that three out of four perpetrators struggled to concentrate at work because of their abusive actions and 80% reported a negative effect on their job performance due to the violence they inflicted on others, with 19% reporting having caused or nearly caused an accident at work due to being distracted by violence they had committed or were planning.<sup>11</sup>
  - A number of Work Health and Safety guides show that the loss of productivity of perpetrators may be a result of: a perpetrator phoning or emailing victim/survivors during work, damaging property belonging to the victim/survivor or workplace, requiring leave to attend legal proceedings related to domestic and family violence orders, and impacting the safety of other employees.<sup>12</sup>

### Employers have a duty to provide safe workplaces

Domestic and family violence happens both in the workplace and through the use of workplace resources. Under workplace health and safety laws employers have a duty of care to eliminate or minimise any risk, so far as is reasonably practicable, that an employee may be exposed to. Employers should be mindful that these duties apply when employees are at the physical workplace and when an employee is working from home.

### Workplaces can make a difference

Many of the impacts of the perpetrator's violence and abuse can be mitigated by supportive workplace responses. As a regular place of engagement, workplaces are likely to be a site where indicators of domestic and family violence are first visible (e.g. absenteeism, performance issues).

Workplaces have an opportunity to play a role in identifying and responding to domestic and family violence where there is a perceptible impact on an employee's wellbeing, their work, or the workplace.

Effective processes and policies can encourage and enable both employees experiencing domestic and family violence, and employees who are using domestic and family violence to seek support and assistance, if and when they choose to do so.

Economic independence and connection to a workplace can be key factors in enabling a person experiencing domestic and family violence to leave and manage the impacts of an abusive relationship.<sup>13</sup>

Workplaces can also play an important role in encouraging employees who use domestic and family violence to seek help and supporting people to feel able to change their behaviour, and ensure there are appropriate consequences when their behaviour impacts on colleagues or the workplace.

Workplaces have an opportunity to raise awareness of what constitutes a healthy and respectful relationship for those experiencing abuse in addition to educating those that are abusive. Just like those people who don't recognise their behaviour as unacceptable, many people may not recognise themselves as being in a relationship that is violent or abusive.

Furthermore, as microcosms of broader society, and as one of the places we spend a large part of our lives, workplaces play an important role in raising awareness, challenging sexist and other discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, reinforcing respect, safety to speak up, and modelling respectful and healthy relationships. We know that domestic and family violence is much more likely when there are unequal power relations among genders in society, and unequal value and respect afforded to different genders.<sup>14</sup> The risk of violence is further compounded by other forms of discrimination and inequality experienced by under-represented and marginalised groups.

## 2.2 Domestic and family violence is endemic

### In Australia

On average, one woman is killed every 9 days by her current or former partner.<sup>15</sup>



Women with disability are almost twice as likely to experience violence by a cohabiting partner as women without disability.<sup>23</sup>



It is estimated that 62 women were murdered in 2020. Of those deaths, 56 were domestic and family violence related deaths.<sup>16</sup>



On average 13 women per day are hospitalised for assault injuries due to domestic and family violence.<sup>24</sup> There are more than double as many hospitalisations due to domestic and family violence for women as men.<sup>25</sup>



Australian women are nearly three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.<sup>17</sup>



One in six women and one in 16 men have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15.<sup>18</sup> One in four women and one in six men have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous partner since the age of 15.<sup>19</sup>

Intimate partner violence is a major preventable contributor to death and illness in women aged 25-44, ranked third only behind abuse and neglect during childhood and illicit drug use, and is a leading cause of homelessness for women with children.<sup>26</sup>



Across 21 studies of known domestic violence offenders and protection order respondents, men accounted for between 75 and 94% of all offenders.<sup>20</sup>



42% of people assisted by specialist homelessness services have experienced domestic and family violence.<sup>27</sup>



Indigenous adults are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised from family violence than non-Indigenous adults.<sup>21</sup>



Australian police deal with a domestic violence incident every two minutes.<sup>28</sup>



Intimate partner and family violence is experienced at higher rates across LGBTIQ+ individuals and communities.<sup>22</sup>



However, eight in ten women experiencing violence from a current partner have never contacted the police.<sup>29</sup>

## Globally

**Men's violence against women** is one of the world's most prevalent human rights abuses.



**An estimated 736 million women globally** – almost one in three – have experienced intimate partner violence, or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>30</sup>



**137 women are killed worldwide** by a member of their family every day.<sup>31</sup>



In the **United Kingdom**, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that an estimated **8.8 million adults aged 16 to 74 years had experienced domestic abuse** since the age of 16 years for year ending March 2020. This equates to a prevalence rate of approximately 21 in 100 adults.<sup>32</sup>



**On average, nearly 20 people per minute** are physically abused by an intimate partner in the **United States**. During any one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.<sup>33</sup>



**In 28 European Union Member States, 1 in 3 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence** (at least once since 15 years of age).<sup>34</sup>



## COVID-19

**Globally, calls to helplines increased five-fold** in some countries as rates of reported intimate partner violence also increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>35</sup>



**Restricted movement, social isolation, and economic insecurity increased the risk of violence and abuse** in the home and hampered people's ability to report or escape that violence and abuse.<sup>36</sup>



**People who use domestic and family violence weaponised the threat of COVID-19** and COVID-19 lockdown restrictions to enhance coercive and controlling behaviours with marked increases shown in controlling behaviours such as isolation, use of surveillance and monitoring, and use of technology to intimidate.<sup>37</sup>



**In Australia, COVID-19 coincided with the onset of physical or sexual violence or coercive control** for many women. For other women, it coincided with an increase in the frequency or severity of ongoing violence or abuse.<sup>38</sup>





## Research in Australia shows we have a long way to go to address the gendered drivers of domestic and family violence<sup>39</sup>

# 1 in 5



Australians believe domestic violence is a normal reaction to stress.

# 1 in 7



Australians do not agree that women are as capable as men in politics and in the workplace.

# 32%



believe that a female victim who does not leave an abusive partner is partly responsible for the abuse continuing.

# 1 in 5



Australians would not be bothered if a male friend told a sexist joke about women.

# Only 64%



believe men are more likely than women to perpetrate domestic violence.

# 1 in 3



Australians think it is natural for a man to want to appear in control of his partner in front of his male friends.

# Only 49%



of Australians recognise that levels of fear from domestic violence are worse for women.

# 45%



of young people believe that many women exaggerate gender inequality in Australia, with young men (52%) more likely to hold this belief than young women (37%).

# 12%



of Australians mistakenly believe non-consensual sex in marriage is legal and a further 7% do not know whether it is legal or illegal.

# 1 in 7



young people continue to hold beliefs that many allegations of sexual violence made by women are false.

## Economic cost of domestic and family violence

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**\$22 billion**

Violence against women and their children has been estimated to cost Australia \$22 billion annually.

Of this amount,

**\$1.9 billion**

is attributed directly to businesses and productivity

with

**\$443 million**

due to perpetrator absenteeism

**\$860 million**

due to absenteeism of those experiencing violence

and

**\$96 million**

in additional management costs.<sup>40</sup>

**£66 billion**

The total economic and social cost of domestic abuse in **England and Wales** in the year ending March 2017, was estimated as being over £66 billion and has been flagged as being an underestimate due to physical harms and injuries incurred by victim/survivors not being fully captured by the dataset.<sup>41</sup>

**US\$3.6 trillion**

As of October 2020, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in the **United States** has placed the lifetime economic cost associated with medical services for intimate partner violence related injuries, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice and other costs, at US\$3.6 trillion.<sup>42</sup>



## 2.3 Domestic and family violence is perpetrated in many forms

At the heart of domestic and family violence is harmful behaviour deliberately used to exert power and control and cause fear for one's safety and wellbeing or that of someone else. Violence, control and intimidation exist in a range of relationships and settings: intimate partner violence, elder abuse, violence and abuse against children, by carers of people with disability, violence and abuse of parents by children, and violence and abuse by other family members in all family types.

Often the violence or abuse takes place over an extended period of time and continues to exert a traumatic impact long after an individual leaves a violent or abusive relationship.

People who use violence perpetrate a range of different abusive and controlling behaviours and domestic and family violence has both overt and subtle forms:

- **Coercion and threats:** For example, making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt or kill them, children or other family member who is the target of the abuse; threatening to leave, commit suicide or report them to welfare services; making them drop charges; making them do illegal things; threatening to disclose their sexuality, health status or gender identity to family and friends and/or employer; threatening the loss of the family's migrant and asylum seeker visa status which is often controlled by the perpetrator; threatening to remove access to medical care or in home support services.
- **Emotional and psychological abuse to erode confidence:** For example, putting them down; making them feel bad about themselves; calling them names; making them think they are crazy [commonly referred to as 'gaslighting']; playing mind games; humiliating them; making them feel guilty; cheating on a partner and/or telling them of the infidelity.
- **Economic and financial abuse:** For example, preventing them from getting or keeping a job; making them ask for money; giving them an unrealistic allowance or budget; not letting them know or have access to the family income, and accruing debts in their target's name; failing to pay child support, unauthorised use of an elderly person's funds or property by a caregiver, family member or (ex) partner; making a family member responsible for joint debt; financial coercion through violence, threats, blackmail or intimidation; demanding money in exchange for visa or migration sponsorship.
- **Intimidation:** For example, making them afraid by using size, stature, looks, actions or gestures; smashing things; destroying their target's property; abusing or threatening to abuse pets and service animals; displaying weapons; abusing an (ex) partner's privacy by accessing their personal and financial accounts without permission.
- **Physical violence:** For example, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, throwing objects, choking, suffocating, asphyxiation, restraining them, family member or pet; withholding or forced use of medication, alcohol or drugs; restricting access to food; and driving erratically.
- **Sexual violence:** For example, non-consensual sexual activity such as rape/sexual assault; videorecording, photographing, sharing, or threatening to videorecord or share sexual acts without consent; withholding sex and/or affection; and/or minimising/denying feelings about sex or sexual preferences.
- **Isolation:** For example, controlling what their target can do, who they see and talk to, what they read, and where they go; limiting their outside involvement; limiting or controlling access to technology, transport and communications.
- **Stalking:** For example, monitoring their movements, actions or social engagements, either in person, through others or using technology.

- **Spiritual or cultural abuse:** For example, preventing someone from practising their religion or cultural practices, or misusing spiritual, religious or cultural beliefs and practices to justify other types of abuse and violence.
- **Minimising, denying and blaming:** For example, making light of abuse; saying the abuse didn't happen; shifting responsibility for their abusive behaviour; blaming the person experiencing violence for the abusive behaviour; using jealousy to justify their actions.
- **Reproductive abuse:** For example, forcing or pressuring an (ex) partner to have a baby or an abortion; threatening to or causing miscarriage; hiding or stopping a partner from buying birth control; insisting on unprotected sex; sabotaging birth control measures; threatening to leave if a woman fails to conceive; forced or coerced sterilisation; or forced use of contraception for people with a disability.
- **Using children:** For example, committing violence and abuse in front of children; making them feel guilty about children; using children to relay messages; using visitation to harass the (ex) partner; threatening to abduct children; breaching visitation order by not returning children.
- **Using pets:** For example, animal abuse, including actual or threats of violence; neglect; deprivation of veterinary care; controlling or restricting access to service animals.
- **Using privilege:** For example, treating them like a servant; making all the major decisions; being the one to define men's and women's roles.
- **Legal bullying and abusive post-separation tactics:** For example, exploiting family court proceedings to intimidate or maintain contact with them; making false reports to child welfare authorities; making false claims of kidnapping or refusing access to children.

Increasingly, people who use violence are **using technology** to perpetrate that violence including:

- **Tracking and stalking the target:** For example, using mobile phones and tracking devices to track their location; installing surveillance devices in or around the home or car and inside children's belongings; accessing online accounts, using micro-transactions in online banking to elicit threats and abuse.
- **Using technology to threaten, coerce and harass the target:** For example, abusive phone calls, text messages, and social media posts; accessing online accounts including banking, image based abuse.
- **Using technology to hack** into an (ex) partner's or other family members' personal and/or financial accounts; changing their passwords and locking them out of their accounts.
- **Using technology to isolate** by controlling access to all technology, owning all technology, prohibiting access or using technology to monitor or tether them so that it feels impossible to leave or seek help.

Extensive research has been conducted on domestic and family violence and when it is likely to occur within the family/relationship lifecycle. **Factors that indicate that an individual or family is at increased risk of experiencing domestic and family violence include:**

- **Separation:** women who have recently separated are more likely to experience violence as the person using violence seeks to regain control.<sup>43</sup>
- **Pregnancy and early-parenthood:** women are more likely to experience violence during pregnancy, and one in four women experiencing violence indicate that the violence first occurred during pregnancy.<sup>44</sup> Approximately one in three mothers experience intimate partner violence before their first child turns four years of age.<sup>45</sup>
- **Past experience of child abuse:** women who have experienced abuse during childhood are more likely to experience violence in adulthood.<sup>46</sup>

## 2.4 Domestic and family violence is the result of gender inequality

Certain groups of people may be at greater risk of experiencing domestic and family violence and in particular, intimate partner violence. Being a woman is the highest risk factor for experiencing domestic and family violence. Other groups of people at greater risk include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, people with a mental illness, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and LGBTIQ+ people.<sup>47</sup> People belonging to two or more of these groups may be at even greater risk of experiencing domestic and family violence because of the way in which multiple forms of discrimination and oppression can interact to compound violence perpetration.<sup>48</sup>

While all genders can experience domestic and family violence, the majority of violence, including intimate partner violence, is perpetrated by men and the majority of people who experience violence are women and children.<sup>49</sup>

The gendered drivers of all forms of violence against women, including intimate partner violence, include:

- Condoning of violence against women.
- Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence.
- Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity.
- Disrespect towards women, and men's peer relations that emphasise aggression.<sup>50</sup>

Not all disrespect towards women results in violence. But all violence against women starts with disrespect. For domestic and family violence specifically, power imbalance, including dependence, is also a key driver.

When gender norms are challenged, we can see an increase in the incidence of physical violence and emotional abuse as a "backlash effect". For example, women face a 35% increase in the chance of experiencing domestic and family violence once they start earning more than their male partners as this challenges the gender norm around men being the primary financial earner.<sup>51</sup> Violence and abuse can be used by perpetrators in an attempt to reassert dominance and control.

It is critical to acknowledge the gendered nature of domestic and family violence to ensure that prevention efforts are appropriately designed and targeted.

Domestic and family violence is just one form of gendered violence that women experience in their lifetime. Other forms of gendered violence, including sexual harassment, are also characterised by one person exerting power and control over another and are inextricably linked to gender and other forms of inequality.

While workplace sexual harassment can often be more visible to leaders, the impact of domestic and family violence on individuals and workplaces is just as damaging and the role of the workplace in preventing and responding to domestic and family violence just as important.

## 2.5 Domestic and family violence is preventable

Domestic and family violence is the product of complex yet changeable social and environmental factors. It is often driven by beliefs and behaviours that reflect disrespect for women, low support for gender equality, and adherence to rigid or stereotypical gender roles.

Addressing all forms of discrimination and creating equality and respect between all people is critical to preventing all forms of domestic and family violence.

Other factors that sometimes contribute to or exacerbate domestic and family violence include:

- **The condoning of violence in general in our society.** This makes violence, particularly men's violence, seem like a normal part of life.
- **Experience of or exposure to violence.** For example, in childhood, or in communities with high levels of violence.
- **Harmful use of alcohol, and harmful ideas about alcohol and violence.** For example, inhibitions are lowered contributing to increased likelihood of using violence and abuse or escalating existing behaviours.
- **Socio-economic inequality and discrimination.** When women have lower social or economic status and power, or they are treated as less worthy of respect, they are more likely to experience violence.
- **Backlash, hostile reactions and retaliation to positive social change.** This can happen when men's status and privilege are challenged by calls for gender equality.

Workplaces have a vital role to play in creating an environment where women are not only safe but also respected, valued and treated as equals. Effective gender equality strategies in the workplace can help to reduce the incidence of domestic and family violence.

The use of domestic and family violence is a 'choice'. People who use domestic and family violence are responsible for their behaviour and can choose to change it.

Workplaces play an important role in offering referral pathways to support employees to stop using violence and abuse. There are no excuses for violent and abusive behaviour.

Workplace action on domestic and family violence is a critical step in creating gender equality and working towards eliminating domestic and family violence in our communities. The more workplaces that take appropriate action the better it will be for individuals, families, businesses and the community at large. We all must play our part.

Julie Oberin AM, National Chair, WESNET

## 2.6 Domestic and family violence effects are different across the community

Domestic and family violence occurs regardless of socio-economic status, age, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or ability. However some groups experience a higher prevalence of domestic and family violence and may experience domestic and family violence differently, including from a wider range of family members in all family types.<sup>52</sup> These groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, migrant and refugee women, LGBTIQ+ individuals and communities, young women, elderly women, pregnant women, women separating from their partners, people with disability, and women experiencing financial hardship.<sup>53</sup>

These groups may also experience additional barriers to accessing help and support. Some examples of these barriers are outlined below. It should be recognised that these groupings are not mutually exclusive and people can identify with more than just one:

- **Women with disability** are significantly more likely than other women to experience more severe forms of domestic and family violence, for extended periods of time and by more perpetrators, including in group homes and institutions. Abuse may take the form of withholding or damaging medicines or assistive devices.<sup>54</sup> They also have considerably fewer pathways to safety (including inaccessibility of refuges) and are less likely to report violence.<sup>55</sup> Also, the violence may be perpetrated against women with disabilities in group homes and institutions (versus family homes) which creates a broader definition of 'domestic' and where domestic violence can be experienced.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** peoples may require a culturally safe environment to disclose and seek support which includes knowledge and respect for how cultural values, knowledge, skills and attitudes are formed and affect others (including a responsibility to address their bias, racism and discrimination), and knowledge and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees may require additional flexibility and leave to provide support to family/kin affected by family violence.
- **Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds**, and particularly from migrant and refugee backgrounds, may face language or cultural barriers and may be less likely to seek help because of the stigma attached, or dependence on the perpetrator related to visa arrangements and being ineligible for government support.
- **People who identify as LGBTIQ+** may fear isolation and homophobia or transphobia in the wider community should they report or seek support and can also experience the threat of being outed by the person using violence to their workplace, friends, family or other community (e.g. faith-based community).
- In **rural and remote communities** an abuser may use isolation as a way of exerting control, and exercise economic abuse by threatening to destroy farm animals or crops, and exploitation of unpaid labour in farming communities. It may be difficult for people experiencing domestic and family violence to access support because of distance from support services or fear of exposure in a small community.<sup>56</sup>
- The majority of **elder abuse** cases reported occurred within a domestic or family relationship (70–86%) with the most commonly reported relationship being an adult child perpetrating abuse (financial and emotional) against their parent.<sup>57</sup> This relationship can pose a significant barrier to people experiencing violence reporting or seeking support due to reluctance to disclose abuse by a family member or where they are dependent on the abuser for care.<sup>58</sup>
- **Economic dependence on an abuser** is a major barrier to people leaving domestic and family violence situations, making employment a significant protective factor<sup>59</sup> as well as providing longer-term benefits associated with financial security.<sup>60</sup> Further, a person escaping domestic and family violence will often be leaving with debt due to financial abuse experienced during the relationship.<sup>61</sup>



- **Some communities have historical difficulties** in relationships with police or justice system responses, for example LGBTIQ+ communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Understanding the different experiences of diverse groups is critical to ensuring that the support we offer and the language we use to communicate about domestic and family violence is appropriate and meets the needs of the community.

## 2.7 Domestic and family violence perpetrators don't have a typical profile

There is no single profile of those who use domestic and family violence, just as there is no 'typical' profile of people who might experience it. The use of violence and abuse is not confined by socio-economic status, age, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ability, residential postcode, occupation, education or another aspect of a person's background.

However, while there might not be a singular profile for someone who uses domestic and family violence, we do know men who use domestic and family violence are more likely to have sexist beliefs about women and strong, engrained beliefs about gender, including stereotyped gender roles in relation to caring and other domestic activities.<sup>62</sup> Across 21 studies of known domestic violence offenders and protection order respondents, men accounted for between 75 and 94% of all offenders.<sup>63</sup> Importantly, this does not mean that other genders do not experience domestic and family violence or that women are not perpetrators of domestic and family violence.<sup>64</sup>

Some people who use violence and abuse do not recognise their behaviour as harmful – or are not willing to accept that they are using violence and abuse – until they have help to reflect on and recognise that their behaviour is unacceptable and there are consequences for their behaviour. Some people who use violence and abuse want to change their behaviour, while others may not wish to change.

Wherever a person stands on this spectrum, the choice to stop the use of violence is within their control. There are many experts and professional services available to support people who wish to change their behaviour. Receiving the right support as early as possible is always in the best interests of the person using domestic and family violence and all those affected.

Family and domestic violence must be everybody's business – we need all hands on deck. Leadership from business – small to large – is such an important part in creating a world free from violence. There are men using family and domestic violence in most workplaces across Australia. We need to address this across our community and enable these people to change their behaviour for the safety of people experiencing domestic and family violence across our communities.

Jacqui Watt  
Chief Executive Officer, No to Violence



# Terminology

This resource draws on the expertise of many individuals and organisation across the domestic and family violence sector and terminology can vary by state and territory. The following glossary defines the terminology used in this document.

## **Domestic violence (also known as intimate partner violence)**

Domestic violence refers to violence, abuse, coercion and intimidation between people who are currently or have previously been in an intimate relationship. Those who use domestic violence seek to control and dominate the other person by using behaviour such as physical, sexual, emotional, social, verbal, spiritual and economic abuse (including through technology). This causes fear, psychological harm and/or physical harm.

## **Family violence**

Family violence refers to violence, abuse, coercion and intimidation between family members (for example children, siblings and parents) as well as intimate partners. Those who use family violence do so to control and dominate the other person. This causes fear, psychological harm and/or physical harm.

Family violence is often the preferred term for violence between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as it covers the extended family and kinship relationships in which violence may occur.

## **Person who uses domestic and family violence**

A person who uses domestic and family violence describes someone who is, or may be, using violence and abuse in their relationship with their (ex) partner or members of their family (domestic and/or family violence). The person who uses domestic and family violence is often referred to as the 'perpetrator' in other documents and so this terminology is used occasionally in this Toolkit.

## **Person who has experienced domestic and family violence**

A person who has experienced domestic and family violence refers to someone that experiences domestic and family violence (i.e. victim/survivor of domestic and family violence). At times in this document, the term (ex) partner is used to refer to the person who has experienced domestic and family violence; however, there are many other relationships that can experience domestic and family violence including parent/child, siblings and carers of people with disability.

## **Person affected by domestic and family violence**

A person affected by domestic and family violence refers to someone that experiences the negative impacts of domestic and family violence and will include the person directly experiencing the domestic and family violence (i.e. victim/survivor) and may also include their family and friends, or other members of their household, who are providing support to them.

## **Violence against women**

Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. This includes threats of harm or coercion and can occur in public or in private life. While violence against women often occurs in a family or relationship context, violence against women is broader than what is covered by the term, family violence, as it includes, for example, neighbour, colleague or acquaintance.

**Employee**

Employee is used to refer to people working in a traditional employment relationship. Much of the context of this Toolkit may be applicable to people working outside the traditional employment relationship such as contractors. Seek legal advice on the application of the Toolkit to other workers.

**Workplace**

The workplace includes any place where work is carried out (e.g. office, site, factory or shop) including the home, should the employee work from home.

**Employer**

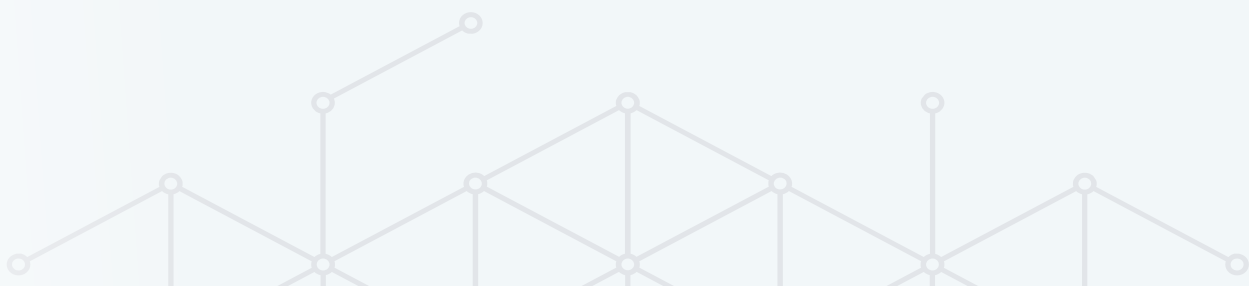
Employer is used to describe both the organisation that employs people and has responsibility for work, health and safety, as well as the leaders that have responsibility for workplace safety and culture.

**Vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout of co-workers and managers<sup>65</sup>**

Vicarious trauma defines the range of cumulative and harmful effects on an individual who has been exposed to and has empathically engaged with other people's trauma and can manifest to the point that the individual's worldview is profoundly and permanently altered. Compassion fatigue has a cumulative effect generally occurring through regular hearing or witnessing traumatic stories, leading to a reduction in interest and wearing down of capacity to empathise with the suffering of others. Burnout is generally more prevalent in professions engaging in therapeutic settings with difficult clients, though also needs to be a consideration in workplaces where managers or staff are dealing regularly with employees experiencing or using violence. Burnout can result in detachment, depersonalisation and reduced sense of accomplishment and/or commitment to a job.

**A domestic violence intervention order**

A domestic violence intervention order (known by different names in each state and territory) is an order to protect people experiencing domestic violence when they are fearful of future violence or threats to their safety. The orders are granted by a court upon application from a person experiencing violence or the police. The terms of the order will depend on the circumstances but will usually include a workplace condition, for example, prohibiting the perpetrator from approaching within a certain distance of the place of work of the victim/survivor.



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## About Champions of Change Coalition

The Champions of Change Coalition includes CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors and community leaders who believe gender equality is a major business, economic, societal and human rights issue. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, our mission is to step up beside women to help achieve gender equality and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

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